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BALLADS

AND

ORIGINAL PIECES.

BY

CHARLES MACLAY,

AUTHOR OF "UNDER GREEN LEAVES."

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LONDON:

H. A. ROUTLEDGE & CO., FARMER STREET,

NEW YORK—19, NASSAU STREET.

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Ballads and Lyrical Poems.

BALLADS & LYRICAL POEMS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY,

AUTHOR OF "THE LUMP OF GOLD," "SONGS FOR MUSIC,"
"EGERIA," ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

G. ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
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Advertisement.



ENCOURAGED by the success which has attended the issue of the Shilling Edition of "Songs for Music," and "The Salamandrine," by Charles Mackay, the Publishers present a third volume, uniform with the foregoing, by the same author. The following Collection formed the second part of a volume originally published under the title of "Legends of the Isles, and other Poems," of which a very limited edition was issued. A few additional pieces have been included, which now appear for the first time. "The Legends of the Isles," now in the press, will form a fourth volume, uniform with this and the two preceding.

FARRINGTON STREET,
August, 1856.

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Ballads and Lyrical Poems.



THE OLD AND THE NEW.

I.

METHOUGHT on the Ægean sand
I saw a mighty Spirit stand,
Clad in his majesty alone ;—
His large fair brow seem'd Wisdom's throne,
And from his face a glory shone.

II.

Another Spirit, great as he,
Stood by the far-off Northern Sea ;
Erect his port, sublime his air ;
Restless he seem'd, and full of care,
But godlike, and divinely fair.

III.

And though between them, as they stood,
All Europe stretch'd its plenitude
Of populous lands ; and mountains cold
Raised their bare peaks, and oceans roll'd,
Each could the other's face behold.

IV.

Each could with each hold converse high,
And mingle voices in the sky ;
Sounding far off, not loud, but clear,
Upon my senses—fill'd with fear—
As from some interlunar sphere.

V.

“Men,” said the first, “inspired by thee,
Talk of their high philosophy ;
Their skill, their science, and their laws ;
Their tracing of effect to cause ;
Their arts that win the world's applause ;

VI.

“Their happy progress evermore,
From good to better than before ;
Their new discoveries sublime ;
Their knowledge spread from clime to clime ;
Their triumphs over space and time.

VII.

“They vaunt their manners pure and mild,
And their religion undefiled ;
While all the good that I have wrought
Is banish'd from their daily thought,
Or, if remember'd, set at nought.

VIII.

“Vain of their progress, they contemn
All arts that have not sprung from them ;
And, swoll’n with pride, they cannot see,
If I were not, thou couldst not be,
And that the fruit proclaims the tree.”

IX.

“Nay!” said the second ! “’tis not so ;
They give the reverence which they owe :
Thy memories are the theme of schools—
Thy maxims are their daily rules ;
And none despise thee but the fools.

X.

“They own with wonder and with awe
Thine ancient wisdom as their law ;
And that thy glories still inspire
The sweetest music of the lyre,
And steep its chords in heavenly fire ;—

XI.

“That all the arts which most refine,
And make humanity divine,
Were caught from thee ; and that the page
Which tells thy deeds from age to age,
Is of itself an heritage.

XII.

“That an immortal beauty girds
Thy form, and sanctifies thy words ;
And that thy very name can raise
Visions that fill us with amaze,
From the abyss of former days ;—

XIII.

“That mighty glimpses of the truth
Flash’d in the fancies of thy youth ;
And that thy errors, darkly bright,
Were not all error, even in sight
Of those who know a purer light.

XIV.

“All this they see, but cannot own
Thou wert perfection overthrown ;
Or that as Time, with onward pace,
Removed old systems from their place,
Thou wert the best for every race.

XV.

“They will not own that for the few
The toil of millions should be due—
Or that the multitudes of man,
Mere serfs and helots in thy plan,
Should groan for ever under ban ;—

XVI.

“That thou shouldst grind them at thy will,
And at thy pleasure maim or kill ;
Or make them build thy columns high,
Or pyramids to dare the sky ;
Or force them in thy broils to die.

XVII.

“They know, though beauteous and refined,
Thou wert a scourge to human kind ;
And they rejoice thy power has pass’d,
And that the time has come at last
When chains must fall, however fast ;

XVIII.

“And when the many, wearied long,
Borne down by tyranny and wrong,
May lift their heads and look around,
Proud of the knowledge lately found,
They are not serfs upon the ground ;

XIX.

“But freemen, heritors by birth
Of the enjoyments of the earth ;
Free not alone to till the soil,
But to partake the fruits of toil—
The corn, the vintage, and the oil ;

XX.

“Free not alone, as Nature meant,
To live their life, and die content ;
But free to teach, and to be taught,
To read the Book with wisdom fraught,
To think—and interchange their thought.”

XXI.

“Ay,” said the first, “’tis brightly drawn—
Thou’st made a noontide of the dawn ;
For wheresoe’er I turn mine eyes
I see a crowd of agonies—
I hear the murmurs that arise.

XXII.

“Though great thy triumphs, greater still
The aggregate of human ill ;—
And narrow, narrow is the span
On which, to bless the sons of man,
The tide of effort ever ran.

XXIII.

“Look round the nations and compare—
Examine that thou mayst declare
What vast improvement has begun,
And what two thousand years have done
For those that toil beneath the sun.

XXIV.

“The people grovell’d in my prime—
They grovel in thy happier time ;
And suff’ring then—they suffer now :
And if I left them slaves, hast thou
Imprinted freedom on their brow ?

XXV.

“Hast thou giv’n virtue to the base,
Or flash’d thy knowledge in their face ?
Hast thou convey’d to every shore
The tidings thy Messiah bore,
That Peace should reign for evermore ?

XXVI.

“Hast thou, in lands supremely bless’d
With thy refinements, done thy best
To ease the ills thou canst not cure,
To teach the wretched to endure,
And shower thy blessings on the poor ?”

XXVII.

“I am but young,” the Spirit said ;
“But yesterday I raised my head,
And late began to understand—
A mere new-comer in the land—
What was expected at my hand.

XXVIII.

“The mission unfulfill’d by thee
Has gain’d some impetus from me ;
And every triumph of thy mind,
Not unforgotten for mankind,
Has been led further and refined.

XXIX.

“Though narrow yet the sphere of thought,
It has been widen’d since I wrought ;
And every seed which thou hast sown
For human benefit, has grown,
And larger leaves and branches thrown,

XXX.

“Beneath my care. And though dark night
May spread a veil o’er human sight,
I see far off the dawning ray:
I labour to prepare the way,
And watch the coming of the day.”

XXXI.

And as the Spirit spoke, his eyes
Flash’d heavenly fire—and to the skies
Pointing his hand he turn’d to me,
And said—“Thou dreamer, wake and see
The Paradise that earth might be !”

XXXII.

As one upon a mountain-top
Standing alone, whom mists enwrap
So densely, that he seeks in vain
Amid the cloud of sleet and rain
To see the wonders of the plain,

XXXIII.

Shouts when he sees the cloud dispersed,
And in full glory at one burst,
A world disclosed—hill, valley, town,
Glittering in sunlight miles adown—
River and lake and highlands brown ;—

XXXIV.

So I, in ecstasy and awe,
Look'd up believing, and I saw
That from mine eyes a mist was roll'd,
That heaven was bright as burnish'd gold,
And earth had visions to unfold.

XXXV.

I saw the world before me pass ;—
As in some great magician's glass
The adept sees phantasmas, dim
To all men else, but clear to him,
As in the light and shade they swim ;—

XXXVI.

So I beheld the mighty Earth
Rolling through ether ; all its girth
Exhaling glory. O'er my sight
Flow'd the full tide of heavenly light,
Until the view seem'd infinite.

XXXVII.

All happy were its populous lands ;
Therein no man with willing hands
Needed to pine for want of bread ;
For the full banquet that was spread
Allow'd all creatures to be fed.

XXXVIII.

And toil, a burden borne by man
In sorrow since the world began,
No more his tender bones oppress'd
Until supremest joy was rest,
Or bow'd his head upon his breast.

XXXIX.

But iron servants wrought his will,—
Great engines fashion'd by his skill
For every art—to spin—to coil—
To delve the mine, to till the soil,—
And free the human race from toil.

XL.

And not alone by vapour driven,
But by the storms and calms of heaven—
By winds, however they might blow,
And by the tides in ebb or flow,
The mighty wheels went to and fro.

XLI.

The nearest and remotest lands
Were foes no more, but join'd their hands
For mutual happiness and peace ;
And bade their old dissensions cease,
That they might flourish and increase.

XLII.

Too wise for bloodshed, War no more
Made demons of them as before ;
Religion sow'd no poison-seed—
None wish'd his neighbour evil speed,
Or bore him malice for his creed.

XLIII.

But as I look'd with tearful eyes—
Tears sprung of joys and sympathies—
The colours of my vision grew
Many in one ; and hue with hue
Was blent, and faded from my view.

XLIV.

And a still voice said to my heart—
“Though but a dream thou seest depart,
And great the load of actual ill,
Hope in thy waking—labour still—
Deeds are fruition of the will.

XLV.

“The smallest effort is not lost ;—
Each wavelet on the ocean toss’d
Aids in the ebb-tide or the flow ;
Each rain-drop makes some flow’ret blow ,
Each struggle lessens human woe.”



THE COMING TIME.

“What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come mine own?”

COWLEY.

WHAT thou shalt do to be for ever known?

Poet or statesman—look with steadfast gaze,

And see yon giant *Shadow* 'mid the haze,

Far off, but coming. Listen to the *moan*

That sinks and swells in fitful under-tone,

And lend it words, and give the shadow form ;—

And see the *Light*, now pale and dimly shown

That yet shall beam resplendent after storm.

Preach thou their coming, if thy soul aspire

To be the foremost in the ranks of fame ;—

Prepare the way, with hand that will not tire,

And tongue unfaltering, and o'er earth proclaim

The *Shadow*, the ROUSED MULTITUDE ;—the *Cry*,

“JUSTICE FOR ALL!”—the *Light*, TRUE LIBERTY.

TUBAL CAIN.

I.

OLD Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when earth was young ;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
The strokes of his hammer rung ;
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron glowing clear,
Till the sparks rush'd out in scarlet showers,
As he fashion'd the sword and spear.
And he sang—"Hurra for my handiwork !
Hurra for the Spear and Sword !
Hurra for the hand that shall wield them well,
For he shall be king and lord !"

II.

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
As he wrought by his roaring fire,
And each one pray'd for a strong steel blade
As the crown of his desire ;
And he made them weapons sharp and strong,
Till they shouted loud for glee,
And gave him gifts of pearls and gold,
And spoils of the forest free.
And they sang—"Hurra for Tubal Cain,
Who hath given us strength anew !
Hurra for the smith, hurra for the fire,
And hurra for the metal true !"

III.

But a sudden change came o'er his heart
Ere the setting of the sun,
And Tubal Cain was fill'd with pain
For the evil he had done ;
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind,
That the land was red with the blood they shed
In their lust for carnage, blind.
And he said—"Alas ! that ever I made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man !"

IV.

And for many a day old Tubal Cain
Sat brooding o'er his woe ;
And his hand forbore to smite the ore,
And his furnace smoulder'd low.
But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
And a bright courageous eye,
And bared his strong right arm for work,
While the quick flames mounted high.
And he sang—"Hurra for my handiwork !"
And the red sparks lit the air ;
"Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made ;"
And he fashion'd the First Ploughshare !

V.

And men, taught wisdom from the Past,
In friendship join'd their hands,
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And plough'd the willing lands ;
And sang—" Hurra for Tubal Cain !
Our stanch good friend is he ;
And for the ploughshare and the plough
To him our praise shall be.
But while Oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the Plough,
We'll not forget the Sword !"



THE FOUNDING OF THE BELL.*

I.

HARK ! how the furnace pants and roars,
Hark ! how the molten metal pours,
As, bursting from its iron doors,
It glitters in the sun.
Now through the ready mould it flows,
Seething and hissing as it goes,
And filling every crevice up
As the red vintage fills the cup :
Hurra ! the work is done !

* When this Ballad was written, the author had not read Schiller's poem on the same subject ; or it is possible—and most probable—that he would not have incurred the formidable risk of a comparison.

II.

Unswathe him now. Take off each stay
That binds him to his couch of clay,
And let him struggle into day :

Let chain and pulley run,
With yielding crank and steady rope,
Until he rise from rim to cope,
In rounded beauty, ribb'd in strength,
Without a flaw in all his length :

Hurra ! the work is done !

III.

The clapper on his giant side
Shall ring no peal for blushing bride,
For birth, or death, or new-year tide,

Or festival begun !

A nation's joy alone shall be
The signal for his revelry ;
And for a nation's woes alone

His melancholy tongue shall moan :

Hurra ! the work is done !

IV.

Borne on the gale, deep-toned and clear,
His long loud summons shall we hear,
When statesmen to their country dear

Their mortal race have run ;

When mighty monarchs yield their breath,
And patriots sleep the sleep of death,
Then shall he raise his voice of gloom,
And peal a requiem o'er their tomb :

Hurra ! the work is done !

V.

Should foemen lift their haughty hand,
And dare invade us where we stand,
Fast by the altars of our land

We'll gather every one :
And he shall ring the loud alarm,
To call the multitudes to arm,
From distant field and forest brown,
And teeming alleys of the town :

Hurra ! the work is done !

VI.

And as the solemn boom they hear,
Old men shall grasp the idle spear,
Laid by to rust for many a year,
And to the struggle run ;
Young men shall leave their toils or books,
Or turn to swords their pruning-hooks ;
And maids have sweetest smiles for those
Who battle with their country's foes :

Hurra ! the work is done !

VII.

And when the cannon's iron throat
Shall bear the news to dells remote,
And trumpet-blast resound the note,
That victory is won :
When down the wind the banner drops,
And bonfires blaze on mountain-tops,
His sides shall glow with fierce delight,
And ring glad peals from morn to night :

Hurra ! the work is done !

VIII.

But of such scenes forbear to tell—
May never War awake this bell
To sound the tocsin or the knell ;—
Hush'd be the alarum gun ;—
Sheath'd be the sword ! and may his voice
But call the nations to rejoice
That War his tatter'd flag has furl'd,
And vanish'd from a wiser world.

Hurra ! the work is done !

IX.

Still may he ring when struggles cease,
Still may he ring for joy's increase,
For progress in the arts of peace,
And friendly trophies won.
When rival nations join their hands,
When plenty crowns the happy lands,
When knowledge gives new blessings birth,
And freedom reigns o'er all the earth.

Hurra ! the work is done !



LIFE'S COMPANIONS.

I.

WHEN I set sail on Life's young voyage,
'Twas upon a stormy sea :
But to cheer me night and day,
Through the perils of the way,
With me went companions three—
Three companions kind and faithful,
True as friend and dear as bride ;
Heedless of the stormy weather,
Hand in hand they came together,
Ever smiling at my side.

II.

One was HEALTH, my lusty comrade,
Cherry-cheek'd and stout of limb ;
Though my board was scant of cheer,
And my drink but water clear,
I was thankful, bless'd with him :
One was mild-eyed PEACE OF SPIRIT,
Who, though storms the welkin swept,
Waking gave me calm reliance,
And though tempests howl'd defiance,
Smooth'd my pillow when I slept.

III.

One was HOPE, my dearest comrade,
Never absent from my breast,
Brightest in the darkest days,
Kindest in the roughest ways,
Dearer far than all the rest.

And though Wealth, nor Fame, nor Station,
Journey'd with me o'er the sea,
Stout of heart, all danger scorning,
Nought cared I in Life's young morning
For their lordly company.

IV.

But, alas ! ere night has darken'd,
I have lost companions twain ;
And the third, with tearful eyes,
Worn and wasted, often flies,
But as oft returns again.
And, instead of those departed,
Spectres twain around me flit ;
Pointing each, with shadowy finger,
Nightly at my couch they linger ;
Daily at my board they sit.

V.

Oh, that I so blindly follow'd
In the hot pursuit of Wealth !
Though I've gain'd the prize of gold,
Eyes are dim, and blood is cold—
I have lost my comrade, HEALTH.
CARE instead, the wither'd beldam,
Steals th' enjoyment from my cup :
Hugs me, that I cannot quit her ;
Makes my choicest morsels bitter ;
Seals the founts of pleasure up.

VI.

Woe is me that Fame allured me—
She so false, and I so blind !
Sweet her smiles, but in the chase
I have lost the happy face
Of my comrade PEACE OF MIND ;
And instead, REMORSE, pale phantom,
Tracks my feet where'er I go ;
All the day I see her scowling,
In my sleep I hear her howling,
Wildly flitting to and fro.

VII.

Last of all my dear companions,
HOPE ! sweet Hope ! befriend me yet.
Do not from my side depart,
Do not leave my lonely heart
All to darkness and regret.
Short and sad is now my voyage
O'er this gloom-encompass'd sea,
But not cheerless altogether,
Whatsoe'er the wind and weather,
Will it seem, if bless'd with thee.

VIII.

Dim thine eyes are, turning earthwards,
Shadowy pale, and thin thy form :—
Turn'd to Heaven thine eyes grow bright,
All thy form expands in light,
Soft and beautiful and warm.

Look then upwards! lead me heavenwards!
Guide me o'er this dark'ning sea!
Pale Remorse shall fade before me,
And the gloom shall brighten o'er me,
If I have a friend in *Thee*.

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

I.

I LOVE to lie in leafy woods,
When summer days grow long,
To hear the fall
Of brooklets small,
Or blackbirds' mellow song:
To watch the dapple clouds afloat,
And trace upon the sky,
In hues of light,
All golden bright,
A thousand castles high.
Stay, O Truth! thy hand relentless,
And, I prithee, spare
My bowers of Bliss—so beautiful—
My castles in the air.

II.

In one abides unchanging Love;—
No guile is on his tongue,
His heart is clear,
His vow sincere,
His passion ever young:

And Care and Penury and Pain
Are powerless to destroy
His early heat,
Communion sweet,
And still recurring joy.
Smooth, O Truth! thy brow majestic,
And in pity spare
My bower of Love so beautiful—
My castle in the air.

III.

True Friendship, in my sky-built halls,
Her presence has bestow'd ;
Each airy dome
Is Virtue's home,
And Honour's own abode ;
And there they flourish evermore,
And twine together still,
Though fortune blind,
And men unkind,
Conspire to work them ill.
Prithee, Truth, look down auspicious,
Stay thine hand, and spare
My bower, for Faith and Friendship built—
My castle in the air.

IV.

The statesmen, governors, and kings,
That in my mansions dwell,
Desire not pelf,
Nor think of self,
But love their country well.

They give to Merit just reward,
To Guilt befitting shame,
And shower on worth,
And not on birth,
The dignities of fame.
Truth, I prithee, stay thine anger,
And my buildings spare,
My bowers for Public Virtue built—
My castles in the air.

V.

Smile on them, Truth ! behold how bright
They glitter in the skies.
Behold how proud,
O'er mist and cloud,
Their golden turrets rise.
But no ! thou frownest, and in vain
Thine angry looks I shun :
My castles tall
Down crumbling fall,
Like ice-drops in the sun.
Thou hast destroy'd my visions lovely,
All my mansions fair,
My bowers of Bliss—so beautiful—
My castles in the air.

A CANDID WOOING.

I.

I CANNOT give thee all my heart,
Lady, lady—
My faith and country claim a part,
My sweet lady :
But yet I'll pledge thee word of mine
That all the rest is truly thine.
The raving passion of a boy,
Warm though it be, will quickly cloy—
Confide thou rather, in the man
Who vows to love thee all he can,
My sweet lady.

II.

Affection, founded on respect,
Lady, lady,
Can never dwindle to neglect,
My sweet lady.
And while thy gentle virtues live,
Such is the love that I will give.
The torrent leaves its channel dry ;
The brook runs on incessantly :
The storm of passion lasts a day,
But deep true love endures away,
My sweet lady.

III.

Accept then a divided heart,
 Lady, lady.
Faith, Friendship, Honour—each have part,
 My sweet lady.
While at one altar we adore,
Faith shall but make us love the more ;
And Friendship, true to all beside,
Will ne'er be fickle to a bride ;
And Honour, based on manly truth,
Shall love in age as well as youth,
 My sweet lady.

THE VOICE OF THE TIME.

I.

DAY unto day utters speech—
 Be wise, O ye nations ! and hear
 What yesterday telleth to-day,
What to-day to the morrow will preach.
 A change cometh over our sphere,
 And the old goeth down to decay.
A new light hath dawn'd on the darkness of yore,
And men shall be slaves and oppressors no more.

II.

Hark to the throbbing of thought,
In the breast of the wakening world :—
Over land, over sea, it hath come.
The serf that was yesterday bought,
To-day his defiance hath hurl'd,
No more in his slavery dumb ;
And to-morrow will break from the fetters that bind,
And lift a bold arm for the rights of mankind.

III.

Hark to the voice of the time !
The multitude think for themselves,
And weigh their condition, each one.
The drudge has a spirit sublime,
And whether he hammers or delves,
He reads when his labour is done ;
And learns, though he groan under penury's ban,
That freedom to think is the birthright of man.

IV.

But yesterday thought was confined ;
To breathe it was peril or death,
And it sank in the breast where it rose ;—
Now, free as the midsummer wind,
It sports its adventurous breath,
And round the wide universe goes ;
The mist and the cloud from its pathway are curl'd,
And glimpses of glory illumine the world.

V.

The voice of opinion has grown :
'Twas yesterday changeful and weak,
Like the voice of a boy ere his prime ;
To-day it has taken the tone
Of an orator worthy to speak,
Who knows the demands of the time ;
And to-morrow 'twill sound in Oppression's cold ear
Like the trump of the seraph to startle our sphere.

VI.

Be wise, O ye rulers of earth !
And shut not your ears to the voice,
Nor allow it to warn you in vain ;
True freedom, of yesterday's birth,
Will march on its way and rejoice,
And never be conquer'd again.
The day has a tongue—ay, the hours utter speech—
Wise, wise will ye be, if ye learn what they teach !



THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE — 1845.

(BEFORE THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS.)

I.

OUR backs are bow'd with the exceeding weight
Of toil and sorrow ; and our pallid faces
Shrivel before their time. Early and late
We labour in our old accustom'd places,
Beside our close and melancholy looms,
Or wither in the coal-seams dark and dreary,
Or breathe sick vapours in o'ererowded rooms,
Or in the healthier fields dig till we weary,
And grow old men ere we have reach'd our prime,
With scarce a wish, but death, to ask of Time.

II.

For it is hard to labour night and day,
With sleep-defrauded eyes and temples aching,
To earn the scanty crust, which fails to stay
The hunger of our little ones, that waking
Weep for their daily bread. 'Tis hard to see
The flow'rets of our household fade in sadness,
In the dank shadow of our misery.
'Tis hard to have no thought of human gladness,
But one engrossing agony for bread,
To haunt us at our toil, and in our bed.

III.

And many of us, worn with age and pain—

Old wither'd leaves of men, who, fading, cumber,
Long for that pleasant fosse, six feet by twain,

Impervious to all grief, where we may slumber.
And others of us, more unhappy still,

Youthful, warm-blooded, with a life to cherish,
Offer in vain our sinews and our skill

For starving recompense, and yet must perish
In our young days, and on a fruitful soil,
Because our food is dearer than our toil.

IV.

'Tis hard to know that the increase of wealth

Makes us no richer, gives us no reliance ;
And that while ease, and luxury, and health

Follow the footsteps of advancing science,
They shower no benefits on us, cast out

From the fair highways of the world, to wander
In dark paths darkly groping still about,

And at each turn condemn'd to rest, and ponder
If living be the only aim of life—

Mere living, purchased by 'perpetual strife.

V.

We rise in grief—in grief lie down again ;

And whither to turn for aid in our deep anguish
We know not—yet we feel that we are men,

Born to live out our days—and not to languish

As if we had no souls ; as if, stone-blind,
We knew not spring was fair ; and that the summer
Ripen'd the fruits of earth with influence kind ;
That harvest ought to be a welcome comer
To us and ours ; and that in Nature's face,
Were smiles of joy for all the human race.

VI.

We ask not much. We have no dread of toil ;—
Too happy we, if labour could provide us,
Even though we doubled all our sweat and moil,
Raiment and food—and shelt'ring roofs to hide us
From the damp air, and from the winter's cold ;—
If we could see our wives contented round us,
And to our arms our little children fold,
Nor fear that next day's hunger should confound us.
With joys like these, and one sweet day of rest,
We would complain no more, but labour, bless'd.

VII.

But these we sigh for all our days in vain,
And find no remedy where'er we seek it ;—
Some of us, reckless, and grown mad with pain
And hungry vengeance, have broke loose to
wreak it :—
Have made huge bonfires of the hoarded corn,
And died despairing. Some to foreign regions,
Hopeless of this, have sail'd away forlorn,
To find new homes and swear a new allegiance.
But we that stay'd behind had no relief,
No added corn, and no diminish'd grief.

VIII.

And rich men kindly urge us to endure,
And they will send us clergymen to bless us ;
And lords who play at cricket with the poor,
Think they have cured all evils that oppress us.
And then we think endurance is a crime ;
That those who wait for justice never gain it ;
And that the multitudes are most sublime
When, rising arm'd, they combat to obtain it,
And dabbling in thick gore, as if 'twere dew,
Seek not alone their rights, but vengeance too.

IX.

But these are evil thoughts ; for well we know,
From the sad history of all times and places,
That fire, and blood, and social overthrow,
Lead but to harder grinding of our faces
When all is over : so, from strife withdrawn,
We wait in patience through the night of sorrow,
And watch the far-off glimpses of the dawn
That shall assure us of a brighter morrow.
And meanwhile, from the overburden'd sod,
Our cry of anguish rises up to God.



A LOVER'S LOGIC.

I.

I AM skill'd in magic lore,
And can tell thee, dearest maiden,
What the winds at evening say,
As amid the boughs they play ;—
What the river to its shore,
Softly whispers evermore
From its heart o'erladen.

II.

I can tell thee how the moon
Breathes persuasion to the billows ;
What discourse the mountain makes
To its shadow-loving lakes ;
And conceal'd in lonely nooks
What the little devious brooks
Murmur to the willows.

III.

“Love thou me—for I love thee,”
Is the song they sing for ever.
At this moment I can hear
The responses ringing clear ;
And the very stars repeat
To the moon an answer sweet—
“Love shall perish never.”

IV.

And if thus Earth, Sea, and Sky
 Find a voice to sing their passion,
 Should we fail, my dearest maid,
 Wandering in this greenwood shade,
 To repeat the same sweet song,
 We should do their music wrong,
 And be out of fashion.



REAL AND IDEAL.

A FRAGMENT.

I.

Two friends were sitting in a chamber fair,
 Hung round with pictures, and in every nook
 Fill'd with choice tomes and busts and marbles rare.
 One sat apart—and one with listless look
 Turn'd o'er, unread, the pages of a book ;
 Both young—and one who seem'd with sadness
 fraught,
 Thus to the other breathed his secret thought.

II.

“I'm weary, Basil, of this ceaseless din :—
 The world hath beat against my heart, and worn,
 By the rude contact of its vice and sin,
 The purity and freshness of its morn ;—
 Tutor'd in callousness, adept in scorn,
 Virtue and Friendship, Honour, Love, and Fame,
 Are things to me no more, each dwindled to a name.

III.

“I’m weary of the world, and daily sigh
For some green resting-place—some forest cave,
Guarded by distance from the intruding eye
Of civil fool and sycophantic knave—
With none to flatter me, and cringe and crave
For dribblets of the gold which I despise,
And all who ask it with their fawning eyes.

IV.

“I’m weary of this pomp and ceaseless thrall,
And pine for peace in wild woods far away;
Though gold the fetters, still they chafe and gall;
Though jewel-hilted, still the sword will slay;
Though set with diamonds of the richest ray,
The glittering cup that held the poison-draught
Provides no antidote to him who quaff’d.

V.

“I will away, and hide me in a bower;—
Or roam the forest, climb the mountain-peak,
Or muse by waterfalls at evening’s hour,
Or count the blushes on the morning’s cheek,
Or in deep silence of the midnight, seek
Communion with the stars, that I may know
How petty is this ball on which we come and go.

VI.

“That I may learn what maggots on a crust
Are men on earth ; and then, perchance, I may
Find some revival of forgotten trust,
Some flower of faith fast fading to decay.—
Here in these hollow crowds, heart-sick I stray,
And find a void—and all my days I grieve
That nothing more is left me to believe.

VII.

“Love?—It is bought for miserable gold.
The fairest creature that the earth e’er saw,—
Fashion’d in beauty’s most delicious mould,
Modest, accomplish’d, pure without a flaw,
Would sell herself, with proper form of law,
For half my wealth ; or ogle to trepan
A Negro Cræsus, or a Mussulman.

VIII.

“Friendship?—Like midges on a beam, the horde
Throng numberless ; and every man pretends
My virtues only lure him to my board—
He hath no selfish interest, no ends
To serve but mine. Oh kind, oh generous friends !
What would ye do should all the ducats fail?—
Fail too—dissolving like the summer hail.

IX.

“Fame?—It is pleasant—but alas! not worth
The panting and the toiling to acquire.
Is any object on this paltry earth
So great, that man should waste his soul of fire,
And carry in his heart the fierce desire
For threescore years, then die without the prize,
Which fools, meantime, have snatched before his eyes?

X.

“What is there left? Long studied in the schools
Of doubt and disbelief, my faith is dead:
I’ve measured God by algebraic rules,
And in a maze of logic long misled,
Having no faith, have set up Chance instead;
Sought refuge in denial, to revolve
No more the problem which I cannot solve.

XI.

“I’m weary, weary, and would be alone,
Away from cities and their stifling crowd,
Far from the scenes where folly on her throne,
For rich and poor, for simple and for proud,
Utters her laws and proclamations loud.
I’m weary—and will hence, and hide in woods,
And feed on quiet in their solitudes.”

XII.

“What?” said his friend—“Thou, Julian! steep’d
in wealth,
The young, the handsome, and the nobly born,
Endow’d with choicest gifts of strength and health—
Dost thou indulge this misanthropic scorn,
And rail at Fortune in thy youth’s fair morn?
And turn disgusted from enjoyment’s cup,
With its rich liquor bubbling ever up?”

XIII.

“Arouse thee from this lethargy of soul—
Shake off the weight that bears thy spirit down—
'Tis but the offspring of the extra bowl
We drain’d last night. Smooth from thy brow
the frown.
There hangs a gloom on the expectant town
When thou art sad :—Come, be thyself again,
Nor with the lore of fools bedull thy brain.

XIV.

“Hear my philosophy, and weigh with thine
The truer wisdom that my tongue shall teach :—
Not ever shall our noon of manhood shine,
Nor pleasure woo us with entrancing speech ;
Not ever shall our arms have power to reach
The golden fruit, that hangs on every bough,
In the fair garden where we wander now.

XV.

“Short on the earth is our allotted time,
And short our leisure to lament and weep ;
Nature, all bounteous, deems denial crime,
And sows a harvest for the wise to reap.
So fill the goblet high—but drain not deep ;
And if at morn you toil, at evening rest—
To-day’s denial is to-morrow’s zest.

XVI.

“Be temperate only to enjoy the more—
So shall no dainty on thy palate pall ;
And cease with fools and bigots to deplore
That earth’s no heaven, and man not perfect all :
Still make the best of whatsoe’r befall,
Nor rail at fortune, though the jade is blind,
Nor launch thy bitter scorn on human kind.

XVII.

“Hope little—thou wilt be the less deceived—
In Love and Friendship be thy rule the same :
And if by Julia’s cruelty aggrieved,
At Laura’s altar light another flame,—
And if she scorn thee, swear by Dora’s name ;—
Nor cling to either with so fond a heart
That it would cause thee half a pang to part.

XVIII.

“For passion is the bane of mortal bliss,
The flame that scorches—not the ray that cheers ;
And every tragedy but teaches this—
Who sows in passion, reaps in blood and tears ;
And he who to his soul too much endears
The sweetest, best, and fairest of her kind,
But makes a despot to enthrall his mind.

XIX.

“Nor let thy savage virtue take offence
If friends should love thee better rich than poor ;—
It may be feeling, but it is not sense—
Ripeness of heart, but judgment immature—
To look for friendship that shall aye endure ;
Or think the lamp would show the same bright ray
Should the oil fail, and riches melt away.

XX.

“Nor let desire of Fame perplex thy thought—
Poor are the objects that Ambition seeks.
The applause of dunces is too dearly bought
By nerveless limbs, care-deaden'd eyes, and cheeks
Furrow'd before their time by aged streaks ;
And the true wisdom never stops to weigh
A shadowy Morrow with a real To-day.

XXI.

“Enjoy the present—gild the passing hour—
Nor drain the cup ;—nor fill it to the brim ;—
For us shall Beauty open wide her bower,
And sparkling eyes in tender languor swim ;
For us shall joy awake the jubilant hymn ;
And round us gather every young delight
That wealth can buy, for taste, or touch, or sight.”

XXII.

“No, Basil, no—I pine for a belief ;
I’m wearied with my doubts, and fain would rest.
Long have I clutch’d, in bitterness and grief,
At all these phantoms, beautifully drest
In colours brighter than the rainbow’s vest.
No, my friend Basil—not in these I trust,
Begun in folly, ending in disgust.

XXIII.

“My soul, long darken’d, languishes for light—
And with an utterance labours night and day.
I see a vision dawning on my sight,
I hear a music faint and far away—
I hear a voice which says, ‘Not all of clay
Thy mortal being—raise thyself, O clod !
Look up, O finite, infinite in God.’

XXIV.

“Oh, that I could believe! oh, that my soul
Could trust in something, and my weary mind
Burst all unfetter'd from the dull control
Of doubt, that thinks it sees, but still is blind!
That I could cling to some one of my kind—
Some gentle soul whose love might be the ray
To lead me to belief, and brighten all the way.

XXV.

“Faith shall be born of Love—oh, happy pair!
Would ye but smile upon my darkening road,
No more my heart, imprison'd by despair,
Should find its sympathies too great a load,
Doubtful alike of self, of kind, of God.—
I will away from all this pomp and jar,
And commune with my soul in solitudes afar.”

* * * *



HEAD AND HEART.

AN UNDECIDED DISPUTE.

I.

SAID Head to Heart, "You lead me wrong :
The pulse of passion beats too strong.
You are the dupe of tears and sighs ;
You take the Judgment by surprise ;

II.

"You melt at every sorrowing tale,
Let Feeling over Will prevail ;
And still, by impulse led astray,
You draw me from the prudent way.

III.

"When I would walk a steady pace ;
Impetuous, you would run a race ;
And ere a doubtful case I've tried,
You've prompted Pity to decide.

IV.

"By bounds of Reason unconfined,
No space your sympathies can bind ;
For, wayward as a petted child,
You scorn restraint, and wander wild.

V.

“I pray you, Heart, these freaks forbear ;
They cause me shame, they breed me care ;
And I am blamed for going wrong,
And counted weak that you are strong.”

VI.

Said Heart to Head, “You’re cold and slow ;
You cast a damp on Feeling’s glow ;
You are like water on the fire ;
You are a clog on my desire.

VII.

“You measure Passion by a rule,
You send the sympathies to school,
And, slave to logic and its laws,
You weigh, you ponder, and you pause.

VIII.

“When I would prompt the pitying tear,
You purse the lip and look severe,
And quick to doubt and slow to grieve,
You lecture when you should relieve.

IX.

“Oh ! it is galling to be tied
To one so sluggish to decide,
Who chills me when I glow’d before,
And clings to earth when I would soar.”

X.

The silent contest lasted long,
For both were right ;—yet both were wrong.
“Strive,” to my secret soul I said,
“To reconcile the Heart and Head.

XI.

“And let the Heart too warm and free,
Too sudden in its energy,
Pause for the advice of cooler Tact,
And learn to think before it act.

XII.

“Let Head, too prone to reason still,
Even in extremity of ill,
Consent to play a warmer part,
Led by the dictates of the Heart.”



LITTLE FOOLS AND GREAT ONES.

I.

WHEN at the social board you sit,
 And pass around the wine,
 Remember, though abuse is vile,
 That use may be divine :
 That Heaven, in kindness, gave the grape
 To cheer both great and small—
 That little fools will drink too much,
 But great ones not at all.

II.

And when in youth's too fleeting hours
 You roam the earth alone,
 And have not sought some loving heart
 That you may make your own :—
 Remember woman's priceless worth,
 And think, when pleasures pall—
 That little fools will love too much,
 But great ones not at all.

III.

And if a friend deceived you once,
 Absolve poor human kind,
 Nor rail against your fellow-man
 With malice in your mind ;

But in your daily intercourse,
Remember, lest you fall—
That little fools confide too much,
But great ones not at all.

IV.

In weal or woe be trustful still ;
And in the deepest care
Be bold and resolute, and shun
The coward foe Despair.
Let work and hope go hand in hand ;
And know, whate'er befall—
That little fools may hope too much,
But great ones not at all.

V.

In work or pleasure, love or drink,
Your rule be still the same—
Your work not toil, your pleasure pure,
Your love a steady flame ;
Your drink not maddening, but to cheer ;—
So shall your bliss not pall,
For little fools enjoy too much,
But great ones not at all.

LOST AND WON.

I.

AN idler, on the shady sward extended,
 Lay listless on a summer's afternoon :
 Thick boughs and numerous leaves above him
 blended
 Into an arch, through which the beams were
 strewn
 Upon the grass, like ripples on a river ;
 There was a sleepy loveliness around,
 The quiet winds scarce caused the leaves to quiver,
 And vagrant bees flew by with drowsy sound.

II.

Too full of life for sleep—too calm for waking,
 The place seem'd fit for dreamer such as he,
 Who, worldly thoughts and haunts of men forsaking,
 Resign'd himself to lazy luxury.
 His thoughts were shapeless as the winds, and
 wander'd
 Afar in cloud-land, void of all intent ;
 His eyes now closed, as if on self he ponder'd,
 Now open to the leaves and firmament.

III.

Waking or sleeping, or if day or morrow,
 He knew not—but he saw seven ladies fair
 Beside him, with pale cheeks and looks of sorrow,
 And tearful eyes and long dishevell'd hair :

He knew them, and a deep remorse came o'er him,
A shame of self that he had done them wrong ;
While with reproachful looks they stood before him,
And one broke forth into this mournful song :—

IV.

“Listen,” she said, “and hear the wrong thou’st
done us,
And the false deeds thou’st wrought against thy
soul ;
The summer winds shall breathe no more upon us,
We’re gone—our place is fill’d—we’ve reach’d
the goal.
Our melancholy faces look not sunward,
But back in shadow ; and, oh ! never more
Can we return to thee to help thee onward,
And bring thee gladness as we brought before.

V.

“We stay’d with thee long time, with power to aid
thee,
Hadst thou but struggled with an earnest mind,
To do such noble deeds as might have made thee
Stand in the foremost ranks of human kind.
We could have fill’d thy cup to overflowing,
If worldly Wealth found favour in thy sight ;
If Fame inspired, we could have led thee glowing
Up the steep summit, to her topmost height.

VI.

“If Love of Knowledge fired thee to pursue her,
We could have help'd thee to her courts to
climb—
Smooth'd the rough pathway—lent thee words to
woo her,
And turn'd the pages of her book sublime.
If to be virtuous were thy sole ambition,
We, day by day, had taught thee to excel ;
Led thee to raise the wretched from perdition,
And brought their blessings to reward thee well.

VII.

“All this, and more, if thou hadst duly prized us,
For thee, life-waster, could our aid have done ;
But thou hast scorn'd, neglected, and despised us,
And we are powerless, and our course is run.
We are but shadows, pallid and regretful,
To whom no future can a form restore ;
And bearing with us, from thy soul forgetful,
The fair occasions that return no more.”

VIII.

Thus as she spake, his face in shame he cover'd ;
And when he look'd again, he was alone.
“DEPARTED YEARS, whose memory round me hover'd,
For all the Past the Future shall atone,”
He said—and rising, cast away for ever
The philosophic sloth that bound his soul ;
Mix'd with mankind, and, strong with wise endeavour,
Toil'd up the hill of Fame, and reach'd the goal.

THE DEATH OF PAN.

BEHOLD the vision of the death of Pan.—
I saw a shadow on the mountain-side,
As of a Titan wandering on the cliffs;
Godlike his stature, but his head was bent
Upon his breast, in agony of woe;
And a voice rose upon the wintry wind,
Wailing and moaning—"Weep, ye nations, weep!
Great Pan is dying:—mourn me, and lament!
My steps shall echo on the hills no more;
Dumb are mine oracles—my fires are quench'd,
My doom is spoken, and I die—I die!"

The full moon shone upon the heaving sea,
And in the light, with tresses all unbound,
Their loose robes dripping, and with eyes downcast,
The nymphs arose, a pallid multitude,
Lovely but most forlorn; and thus they sang,
With voice of sorrow—"Never—never more,
In these cool waters shall we lave our limbs;—
Never, oh never more! in sportive dance
Upon these crested billows shall we play;—
Nor at the call of prayer-o'erburden'd men
Appear in answer; for our hour is come;
Great Pan has fallen, and we die! we die!"

Emerging slowly from the trackless woods,
And from the umbrageous caverns of the hills,

Their long hair floating on the rough cold winds,
Their faces pale, their eyes suffused with tears,
The Dryads and the Oreads made their moan :—
“Never, oh never more!” distraught, they cried,
“Upon the mossy banks of these green woods
Shall we make music all the summer’s day ;—
Never again, at morn or noon or night,
Upon the flowery sward, by fount or stream,
Shall our light footsteps mingle in the dance ;—
Never again, discoursing from the leaves
And twisted branches of these sacred oaks,
Shall we make answer at a mortal’s call !
Our hour is come, our fire of life is quench’d ;
Our voices fade ; our oracles are mute ;
Behold our agony ;—we die ! we die !”
And as they sang, their unsubstantial forms
Grew pale and lineless, and dispersed in air ;
While from the innermost and darkest nooks,
Deepest embower’d amid those woods antique,
A voice most mournful echo’d back their plaint,
And cried—“*Oh Misery ! they die ! they die !*”

Then pass’d a shadow o’er the moon’s pale disc ;
And to the dust, in ecstasy of awe,
I bent adoring. On the mountain-tops
Thick darkness crept, and silence deep as death’s
Pervaded Nature : the wind sank—the leaves
Forbore to flutter on the bending boughs,
And breathing things were motionless as stones,
As earth, revolving on her mighty wheel,
Eclipsed in utter dark the lamp of Heaven ;

And a loud voice, amid that gloom sublime,
Was heard from shore to sea, from sea to shore,
Startling the nations at the unwonted sound,
And swelling on the ear of mariners
Far tossing on their solitary barks,
A month's long voyage from the nearest land—
“*Great Pan has fallen, for ever, ever more !*”

The shadow pass'd—light broke upon the world ;
And Nature smiled, rejoicing in the beam
Of a new morning blushing from the East ;
And sounds of music seem'd to fill the air,
And angel voices to exclaim on high,
“*Great Pan has fallen ! and never more his creed*
Shall chain the free intelligence of man.
The Christ is born, to purify the earth ;
To raise the lowly, to make rich the poor,
To teach a faith of charity and love.
Rejoice ! rejoice ! an error has expired ;
And the new Truth shall reign for evermore !”



LOVE AWEARY OF THE WORLD.

I.

OH ! my love is very lovely,
 In her mind all beauties dwell ;
 She is robed in living splendour,
 Grace and modesty attend her,
 And I love her more than well.
 But I'm weary, weary, weary,
 To despair my soul is hurl'd ;
 I am weary, weary, weary,
 I am weary of the world !

II.

She is kind to all about her,
 For her heart is pity's throne ;
 She has smiles for all men's gladness,
 She has tears for every sadness,
 She is hard to me alone.
 And I'm weary, weary, weary,
 From a love-lit summit hurl'd ;
 I am weary, weary, weary,
 I am weary of the world !

III.

When my words are words of wisdom,
 All her spirit I can move ;
 At my wit her eyes will glisten,
 But she flies, and will not listen,
 If I dare to speak of love.

Oh ! I'm weary, weary, weary,
By a storm of passions whirl'd ;
I am weary, weary, weary,
I am weary of the world !

IV.

True, that there are others fairer—
Fairer ?—No, that cannot be—
Yet some maids of equal beauty,
High in soul and firm in duty,
May have kinder hearts than she.
Why, my heart, so weary, weary,
To and fro by passion whirl'd ?—
Why so weary, weary, weary,
Why so weary of the world ?

V.

Were my love but passing fancy,
To another I might turn ;
But I'm doom'd to love unduly
One who will not answer truly,
And who freezes when I burn ;
And I'm weary, weary, weary,
To despair my soul is hurl'd ;
I am weary, weary, weary,
I am weary of the world !

THE LOVER'S SECOND THOUGHTS ON WORLD-
WEARINESS.

I.

HEART! take courage! 'tis not worthy
 For a woman's scorn to pine:
 If her cold indifference wound thee,
 There are remedies around thee
 For such malady as thine.
 Be no longer weary, weary,
 From thy love-lit summits hurl'd;
 Be no longer weary, weary,
 Weary, weary of the world!

II.

If thou must be loved by woman,
 Seek again—the world is wide;
 It is full of loving creatures,
 Fair in form, and mind, and features—
 Choose among them for thy bride.
 Be no longer weary, weary,
 To and fro by passion whirl'd:
 Be no longer weary, weary,
 Weary, weary of the world!

III.

Or if Love should lose thy favour,
 Try the paths of honest fame,
 Climb Parnassus' summit hoary,
 Carve thy way by deeds of glory,
 Write on History's page thy name.

Be no longer weary, weary,
To the depths of sorrow hurl'd ;
Be no longer weary, weary,
Weary, weary of the world !

IV.

Or if these shall fail to move thee,
Be the phantoms unpursued,
Try a charm that will not fail thee
When old age and grief assail thee—
Try the charm of doing good.
Be no longer weak and weary,
By the storms of passion whirl'd ;
Be no longer weary, weary,
Weary, weary of the world !

V.

Love is fleeting and uncertain,
And can hate where it adored ;
Chase of glory wears the spirit,
Fame not always follows merit,
Goodness is its own reward.
Be no longer weary, weary,
From thine happy summits hurl'd ;
Be no longer weary, weary,
Weary, weary of the world !

THE DROP OF WATER.

I.

ALONE, amid a million souls,
Round him the tide of people rolls ;
But lorn and desolate is he,
None heeding what his lot may be—
A drop of water in the sea.

II.

'Mid all the crowds that round him swarm,
He feels for him no heart will warm ;
There is not one that knows his name,
Or cares to ask him whence he came ;
His life or death to them the same.

III.

The rich man's chariot passes by,
And lackeys with a saucy eye,
From outside plush and inward meals,
Grin at him, as the rattling wheels
Splash him all o'er, from head to heels.

IV.

He walketh on, a friendless boy,
With much of hope, with little joy ;
Elbow'd for ever by the proud,
As if they grudged the room allow'd
To this mean mortal in the crowd.

V.

On through the busy mass he goes,
But whither bent he scarcely knows ;
Through lane and street, and park and square,
And looks at wealth he may not share,
Though he is hungry and half-bare.

VI.

For him amid these houses small—
For him amid these mansions tall,
There is not one, where he could go,
And say, "I am a child of woe ;
To cheer me, let the wine-cup flow."

VII.

No ; he is friendless and alone—
To no one are his sorrows known—
His hope, or joy, or grief, or fear,
There is not one would care to hear,
Or say the word, "Be thou of cheer !"

VIII.

And evil thoughts will sometimes rise,
When flaunting wealth affronts his eyes ;
Envy, perchance, and discontent,
That he into this world was sent—
No good with all his evils blent.

IX.

“No good?” saith he. “Ah, surely wrong!
Fresh health and youth to me belong ;
And from endurance I can learn
Still to endure, and never turn
From the high thoughts with which I burn.”

X.

And still within himself he says,
“Each man must pass his evil days—
Each man should suffer ere his prime,
If up the world’s high steeps he’d climb,
Some grief to fit him for his time.

XI.

“I am not all alone nor sad ;
The face of Nature makes me glad,
The breath of morn, the evening’s sigh,
The contemplation of the sky,
That fills my soul with yearnings high ;—

XII.

“The leafy glory of the woods,
The rushing of the mountain floods,
The wind that bends the lofty tree,
The roaring of the eternal sea,—
All yield an inward joy to me.

XIII.

I find a pleasure in the sight
Of meadows green and corn-fields bright ;
I find a pleasure in the lay
Of birds that hail the breaking day,
Or warble to the moonlight gray.

XIV.

“If no man loves me, Nature’s voice
Is kind, and bids my heart rejoice :
The path I go, true souls have trod ;
I will look upwards from the clod,
With a firm heart, and trust in God.”

XV.

And thus he walks from hour to hour,
From day to day, and gains new power
Over himself ; and undismay’d,
In conscious rectitude array’d,
He labours as his impulse bade.

XVI.

He looks on hardship, and it sinks ;
He measures peril, and it shrinks ;
Before him difficulties fly,
Scared by that quietude of eye,
Serene to suffer or defy.

XVII.

And still, 'mid the perennial strife
With worldly things, that makes his life,
He never plays the worldling's part,
Or ever from his grateful heart
Allows the freshness to depart.

XVIII.

Amid the city's ceaseless hum,
Still to his soul the visions come
Of the green woodlands far away,
Where, in communion all the day
With Nature, he was wont to stray.

XIX.

And mixing with his fellows, still
He finds some good amid the ill ;
And pitying those whose souls are blind,
Nor hating those of evil mind,
He learns to love all human kind.

XX.

To him all errors of the past
Teach wisdom where his lot is cast ;
And after struggles hard and long,
With self, and with temptation strong,
And pride that sought to lead him wrong,—

XXI.

He learns this truth ; that nought below
Can lasting recompense bestow
But Virtue ;—that the Love of Fame
Is something better than a name,
If Love of Virtue feed its flame ;—

XXII.

That to the mind not mured in self,
Nor toiling for the love of pelf,
Wealth may be worth its cost of brain,
That gives the power to solace pain,
And lift the fallen up again.

XXIII.

Take courage, ye who wander here,
Lonely and sad, and be of cheer !
This man, who had no aids to climb,
But his true heart and soul sublime,
Lives in the annals of his time.

XXIV.

So, by an ever wise decree,
The drop of water in the sea
Awakens to a glorious birth,
Becomes a pearl of matchless worth,
And shines resplendent in the earth.

THE DIONYSIA ; OR, FESTIVALS OF BACCHUS.

My fancy travell'd back three thousand years
 To find the meaning of the ancient days,
 And disencumber their simplicity
 From the corruptions of a later time.
 I fashion'd in my mind the god-like shape
 Of Dionysius, mighty conqueror,
 Who taught the early nations how to live :
 No vulgar Bacchus straddling on a cask,
 Drunken and bestial, but a king of men ;
 Noble in intellect, and fair in form,
 With ivy and with budding violets crown'd,
 And bearing on his cheerful face the glow
 Of kindly wisdom and perpetual youth.
 So to my thought appear'd the demi-god ;
 The same that taught the ignorant hinds of Greece
 To plough the soil, and reap the annual corn ;
 That taught the grateful villages to press
 The grape and apple for refreshing drink,
 To clip the goat, and shear the sheep for wool,
 To draw from willing Earth its constant stores
 Of blessings, and be thankful for the gifts,
 Proving their thankfulness by temperate use :
 The same that swept his armies o'er the East,
 And conquer'd India—mightiest name malign'd—
 Philosopher and Hero. Once his praise
 Resounded o'er the smiling vales of Greece,
 And youths and maidens came from all the bowers
 To chant loud hymns in honour of his name ;
 And Athens—ere she rotted to her fall

With luxury, lasciviousness, and sloth—
Vied with all Greece to celebrate his feasts
With greatest pomp of high solemnity.

Come from your graves, ideas of the past !
And live again in song. The Athenian streets
Teem with a multitude of young and old :
The Archons, and the people, and the priests,
To celebrate the Dionysian rites,
With dance, and song, and joyous revelry.
A troop of youths come first, who hold aloft
Two sacred vessels. One is filled with wine,
And one with water : holiest the last,
For water is the mother of the vine,
The nurse and fountain of fecundity,
The adorning and refresher of the world.
Then come a hundred virgins—flower of Greece—
Clad in white robes, with ivy in their hair,
Who carry baskets fill'd with choicest fruits,
With apples and pomegranates, figs and grapes,
Amid which twine and slide small silvery snakes,
To teach the people, by a parable,
There dwells a poisonous serpent in excess.
The thyrsus-bearers follow in a rout,
With drums, and pastoral pipes, and mellow flutes :
Amid the crowd they scatter cones of pine,
As emblems of the fruitfulness of Earth ;
And sing, full-voiced, the Dionysian hymn.

Io ! Io ! Evohé !

Let the dance and song abound :
The corn is springing from the ground,

The vine puts forth its tender leaves,
The swallow builds in barns and eaves—

Io ! Bacché ! Evohé !

There shall be bread for all the year,
And wine the heart of man to cheer—

Io ! Io ! Evohé !

Io ! Io ! Evohé !

For these bounties—ever free—
Ever grateful let us be,
And use them wisely, day and night,
For health, and strength, and pure delight.

Io ! Bacché ! Evohé !

God of the water and the wine,
The blessing's ours, the praise is thine.

Io ! Io ! Evohé !

The chorus passes ; and another crowd
Follow with other rites, and other songs.
Lo ! mounted on an ass, Silenus rides,
Obese and drunken, crown'd with poppy-flowers,
And reeling as he sits. Around him throng
The crowd of men and women, shouting forth
Their gibes and jests, their laughter and their scorn.
Wise are the people, even in rites like these ;
Each ceremony, frantic or grotesque,
Has its own meaning, and subserves an end.
Great Dionysius teaches evermore
The principles of use, and temperate joy.
But as the will is weak when pleasure goads
To overstep the wholesome boundaries
That separate enjoyment from abuse,

Silenus ever follows in his train,
The type of gluttony, excess, and lust.
Him, all the people point at as he goes,
Half-falling from his ass with idiot stare ;
And mock him with their fingers and their songs.

Dirty Silenus ! god of swine,
Drunken on the lees of wine ;
Mad Silenus ! old and fat,
Round and pond'rous as a vat :
Youth and Beauty gaze on thee,
Warn'd by thy deformity.

Foolish god ! that hast grown old
Ere thy middle life is told ;
Bald and blear, and weak and dull,
Ere thy growth has reach'd its full ;
Mad Silenus ! god of swine,
Drunken on the lees of wine.



 YOUNG GENIUS.

IMBUED with the seraphic fire
 To wake the music of the lyre,
 To love—to know—and to aspire :—

Thou seest in thy youthful dream
 All Nature robed in light supreme,
 And thou wouldst carol in the beam ;

Happy—yet most unhappy still !
 I dread to think what good and ill,
 What joy and grief, thy heart shall fill !

Great shall thy pleasures be—thy soul
 Shall chant with planets as they roll,
 Made one with Nature—part and whole.

The clouds that flush the morning sky,
 The wind that wooes the branches high,
 The leaves that whisper and reply ;

The heart of every living thing,
 The flowers that gem the breast of spring,
 The russet birds that soar and sing ;

The pendulous click of night and day,
 The change of seasons as they play
 In heavenly unison away ;

The summer's sigh, the winter's roar,
The beat of billows on the shore,
Making deep music evermore ;

All sight, all sound, all sense shall be
The fountains of thine ecstasy,
And daily minister to thee.

To thee the past shall disengage
The wisdom of its darkest page,
And give it for thy heritage ;

The present, with its hopes and fears,
Its struggles, triumphs, smiles, and tears,
And glory of the coming years ;

All shall be given to feed thy mind
With Love and Pity for thy kind,
And every sympathy refined.

All these, and more, shall be thine own,
And round thine intellectual throne
The applause of millions shall be blown.

Thy words shall fill the mouths of men,
The written lightnings of thy pen
Shall flash upon their wondering ken.

Oh Fate—oh Privilege sublime !
And art thou tempted ? Wilt thou climb ?
Young genius ! budding to thy prime ?

Reflect :—and weigh the loss and gain ;
All joy is counterpoised by pain :—
And nothing charms which we attain.

Who loves the music of the spheres
And lives on Earth, must close his ears
To many voices which he hears.

'Tis evermore the finest sense
That feels the anguish most intense
At daily outrage, gross and dense.

The greater joy the keener grief,
Of Nature's balances, the chief,
She grants nor favour, nor relief.

And vain, most vain, is youthful trust,
For men are evermore unjust
To their superior fellow-dust,—

And ever turn malicious eyes
On those whom most they idolize,
And break their hearts with calumnies.

Their slanders, like the tempest-stroke,
May leave the cowslip's stem unbroke,
But rend the branches of the oak.

If Genius live, 'tis made a slave ;
And if it die—the true and brave—
Men pluck its heart out on its grave,

And then dissect it for the throng,
And say, "'Twas this,—so weak, or strong,
That pour'd such living floods of song."

Each fault of Genius is a crime,
For Cant or Folly to beslime—
Sent drifting on the stream of Time.

Wouldst thou escape such cruel fate,
Live in the valley,—watch and wait,—
But climb not—seek not to be great.

Yet if thou lovest song so well,
That thou must sing, though this befell
And worse than this, ineffable ;

If thou wouldst win a lasting fame ;
If thou the immortal wreath wouldst claim,
And make the Future bless thy name ;

Begin thy perilous career ;—
Keep high thy heart, thy conscience clear ;—
And walk thy way without a fear.

And if thou hast a voice within,
That ever whispers—"Work and win,"
And keeps thy soul from sloth and sin :

If thou canst plan a noble deed,
And never flag till it succeed,
Though in the strife thy heart should bleed :

If thou canst struggle day and night,
And in the envious world's despite,
Still keep thy cynosure in sight :

If thou canst bear the rich man's scorn,
Nor curse the day that thou wert born,
To feed on husks, and he on corn :

If thou canst dine upon a crust,
And still hold on with patient trust,
Nor pine that Fortune is unjust :

If thou canst see, with tranquil breast,
The knave or fool in purple dress'd,
Whilst thou must walk in tatter'd vest :

If thou canst rise ere break of day,
And toil and moil till evening gray,
At thankless work, for scanty pay :

If, in thy progress to renown,
Thou canst endure the scoff and frown
Of those who strive to pull thee down :

If thou canst bear the averted face,
The gibe, or treacherous embrace,
Of those who run the selfsame race :

If thou in darkest days canst find
An inner brightness in thy mind,
To reconcile thee to thy kind :—

Whatever obstacles control,
Thine hour will come—go on, true soul !
Thou'lt win the prize, thou'lt reach the goal.

If not—what matters ? tried by fire,
And purified from low desire,
Thy spirit shall but soar the higher.

Content and hope thy heart shall buoy,
And men's neglect shall ne'er destroy
Thy secret peace, thy inward joy ;

And when thou sittest on the height,
Thy song shall be its own delight,
And cheer thee in the world's despite.



THE VISION OF DANTON.

The Hôtel de Ville and the Place de Grève of Paris are celebrated as having been the scene of most of the late and preceding Revolutions. The pavement of the Grève has been stained with the blood of the victims of all the Revolutions, and with that of criminals executed by the hand of justice, till within the last few years. This fabulous dream of Danton, in the chambers of this historical mansion,—the very Palace of Revolution,—was written in October, 1847, in anticipation of the Revolution which broke out in February, 1848.

I.

WEARY of strife renew'd from day to day,
Th' inveterate war of parties brought to bay,
With clash of hatreds jarring on his sense,
And poison'd darts of hostile eloquence,
With all the excitement of the brain and heart,
That forms the life of men, who play their part
In mighty dramas,—Danton lay at rest,
His face to Heaven, his hands upon his breast,
And said within himself,—“It must not be—
Surely this grief shall end, and France be free.”

II.

He closed his eyes, and saw a vision pass
Clear as a show in a magician's glass ;
He saw a figure, massive like his own,
Headless and quivering, from a scaffold thrown ;

He saw the pavement running red with blood,
And crowds insatiate dabbling in the flood.
He saw Despair at every threshold stand
And ruffian Terror stalking o'er the land,
And sigh'd remorseful—"Mine the guilt," said he,
"But surely it shall pass, and France be free."

III.

The vision changed : he saw the embattled world,
And France defiant with her flag unfurl'd :
He heard her trumpets peal ; her cannons roar ;
Her captains shout and wave her tricolor.
He saw their leader fattening the sod
With bones of myriads ; heard the cry to God
Raised by the ravaged lands ; he heard and saw
That Might was murder, and that Force was law ;
And sigh'd for pity—"Heaven is just," said he,
"And this new plague shall pass, and France be free."

IV.

The vision darken'd : Paris the superb,
The beautiful, impatient of a curb,
Received the law from strangers at her gate,
And gave for insults nothing but her hate.
She who with trumpet-voice had roused the lands,
Felt on her prostrate neck the Cossack's hands ;
Heard in her panting streets the invader's drum,
And groan'd for worse indignities to come :
And e'en in slumber Danton blush'd to see—
"Surely this shame shall pass, and France be free!"

V.

It changed again : and lo ! a royal drone,
Untaught by suffering, dozed upon the throne ;
Or waking, fancied that his hands could bind
The tide of Thought, the Reason of mankind.
Another follow'd bigoted, but strong,
Who, deeming Time had gone a century wrong,
Strove with a desperate force to turn the hand,
And bring the darkness back upon the land ;
And Danton groan'd—"Oh, that these eyes might see
This folly brought to shame, and France made free."

VI.

The vision brighten'd : Paris as of old
Aroused her faubourgs as the tocsin toll'd ;
Placed in each hand a weapon for the Right,
And fought its battle in the world's despite ;
Dragg'd the degraded purple through the town,
Roll'd in the dust the sceptre and the crown ;
And read the nations listening far and near
A mighty lesson full of hope and fear ;
And Danton shouted in his sleep to see—
"Now has the sorrow pass'd, and France is free."

VII.

Another change and shifting of the parts—
The fool was foil'd—the knave essay'd his arts ;
He hated Freedom and her priests and scribes,
And swore to crush her, not with force, but bribes.

The ignoble plan succeeded for a while—
The halcyon days of Mammon and of guile ;
The dense corruption spread from high to low,
Till virtue perish'd in its overflow ;
And Danton groan'd—" Oh, worst of infamy !
When shall this sorrow pass, and France be free ?"

VIII.

What more he saw was dim before his eyes,
Shapes undefined and huge unsymmetries—
Darkness and storm and thunder-clouds afar,
And forms gigantic panoplied for war ;
But still a radiance glimmer'd through the cloud,—
And a voice seem'd to speak to him aloud :—
" Not all in vain the struggles thou hast seen,
Truth bides her time and keeps her brow serene :
Each seed she scatters bears its destined tree—
The grief shall pass, and France shall yet be free."

GOOD-NIGHT.

I.

HUSH, Nature ! let no jarring sound
The drowsy air encumber,
While she, the fairest of thy works,
Is sinking into slumber.
Be silent, earth ! ye winds, be still—
Let nought from sleep alarm her ;
Nor midnight storm, nor sudden fire,
Nor prowling robber harm her.

II.

Good-night ! and be her pleasant rest
Unbroken till the morrow ;
May all her visions, like herself,
Be sweet, and void of sorrow.
Good-night ! and o'er her silent couch
While darkness spreads her cover,
May guardian angels watch and pray,
And bless her as they hover.

GOOD-MORROW.

[Music by FRANK MORI.]

I.

SHINE brightly through her casement, sun ;
Thou gale, soft odours bring her ;
Ye birds that hail the dawning day,
Your sweetest music sing her ;
Smile, Nature, on her, as she wakes,
And hide all sights of sorrow ;
And have no sounds but those of joy
To bid my love—good-morrow !

II.

Good-morrow to those lustrous eyes,
With bright good-humour beaming ;
Good-morrow to those ruddy lips,
Where smiles are ever teeming.
Good-morrow to that happy face,
Undimm'd by cloud of sorrow.
Good-morrow, heart that clings to mine—
Good-morrow, love, good-morrow !

A SONG, AFTER A TOAST.

I.

IF he to whom this toast we drink
 Has brought the needy to his door,
 Or raised the wretch from ruin's brink
 From the abundance of his store :
 If he has sooth'd the mourner's woe,
 Or help'd young merit into fame,
 This night our cups shall overflow
 In honour of his name.

II.

IF he be poor, and yet has striven
 To ease the load of human care ;
 If to the famish'd he has given
One loaf that it was hard to spare ;
 If in his poverty erect,
 He never did one deed of shame,
 Fill high ! we'll drain in deep respect
 A bumper to his name.

III.

BUT rich or poor—if still his plan
 Has been to play an honest part,
 If he ne'er fail'd his word to man,
 Or broke a trusting woman's heart ;
 If Emulation fire his soul
 To snatch the meed of virtuous fame,
 Fill high ! we'll drain a flowing bowl
 In honour of his name.

MY PLAYFELLOW.

I.

WHAT though you're only five years old,
A little roguish, romping fairy,
And I'm a man of care and toil—
We're comrades true, my little Mary!
We're friends and playmates, close and fond,
And heedless of the wind or weather;
Out-doors or in, 'tis all the same,
We leap, and laugh, and run together.

II.

We love to sit upon the grass
In summer days, in shady valleys,
Or play at merry "hide and seek"
Behind the trees in garden alleys.
And don't we wander forth alone,
To gather crops of meadow daisies?
Or hunt the noisy grasshopper
In all his green and secret places?

III.

And don't we catch the butterfly,
With mealy pinions, sailing lightly?
And don't you, when I let him free,
Gravely decide, I acted rightly?

And don't we teach the dog to beg,
And little puss to frisk and caper?
And don't I paint you birds and fish,
And cut you purses out of paper?

IV.

And don't we spin our humming-top
Together on the parlour table?
And don't your father call me fool,
And smile to utter such a fable?
And don't I tell you fairy tales,
At intercession of your mother?
And don't you kiss me when I've done,
And ask me to begin another?

V.

And don't you oft, with hands outstretch'd,
And eyes that shine like sun-lit fountains,
Protest you love me "big as trees,"
"Big as the world—and all its mountains?"
And don't you sometimes fall asleep,
Lock'd in my arms, quite worn and weary?
And don't I carry you to bed,
Too drowsy for your prayers, my deary?

VI.

Oh, yes! we're friends and comrades true,
There's not a bit of guile about you;
You shed such light around your path,
I'd think the world was dark without you.

And if to fourscore years I live,
However Time and Fate may vary,
I'll wish no better friend than you,
My little laughing, romping Mary.



LOVE IN HATE.

I.

ONCE I thought I could adore him,
Rich or poor, beloved the same ;
Now I hate him and abhor him,
Now I loathe his very name ;
Spurn'd at when I sued for pity,
Robb'd of peace and virgin fame.

II.

If my hatred could consume him,
Soul and body, heart and brain ;
If my will had power to doom him
To eternity of pain ;
I would strike—and die, confessing
That I had not lived in vain.

III.

Oh, if in my bosom lying,
I could work him deadly scathe !
Oh, if I could clasp him, dying,
And receive his parting breath—
In one burst of burning passion
I would kiss him into death !

IV.

I would cover with embraces
Lips that once his love confess'd,
And that falsest of false faces,
Mad, enraptured, unrepress'd ;
Then in agony of pity
I would die upon his breast.



LADY JANE.

I.

OH, Lady Jane, dear Lady Jane,
Those beautiful and earnest eyes
Have shot their beams through many a brain,
And prompted many a world of sighs.
No wonder!—stony-hard and cold
Were he, who gazing on their light—
Ay, were he eighty winters old—
Felt no pulsation of delight.

II.

But tell us, dearest Lady Jane,
What secret witchery and spell
Hast thou to rule the hearts of men,
That not the hardest can rebel?
The hearts of men? Not theirs alone;
For women do not love thee less?
Thou hast some secret of thine own,
Thou saucy little sorceress!

III.

The blind old beggar on the road,
Fed by thy bounty, loves thee more
For gentle sympathy bestow'd,
Than for the tribute from thy store.

The peevish beldame, sour'd by want,
And teased by urchins far and near,
Selects thee for her confidant,
And breathes her sorrows in thine ear.

IV.

The kittens on the hearth prefer
Thy soft caress, than ours more sweet ;
And jealous hound, and snarling cur,
Frolic with pleasure at thy feet.
The parrot swinging to and fro,
That sulks at others, talks to thee ;
And tearful babes forget their woe,
And cuddle, happy, round thy knee.

V.

In fact, there's something, lady dear,
In thee, and on thee, and about—
A power—a charm—an atmosphere—
A fascination in and out,
That makes all creatures, high and low,
Love thee and trust thee. Tell us, then,
The reason why we love thee so—
Thou little fairy, Lady Jane !

VI.

What can it be ? for I confess
I know of beauty great as thine ;
Yet if it be not loveliness,
'Tis something in thee more divine.

'Tis not thy wit, or eloquence,
And thou hast both in ample store ;
'Tis not thy birth, or wealth, or sense,
That makes us captive evermore.

VII.

What is it then ? Thou canst not say—
Then let me tell thee, Lady Jane :
'Tis bright good-humour, warm as day ;
'Tis sympathy for others' pain ;
'Tis heart, and mind, and patience rich ;
'Tis loving kindness, failing never ;
These are thy spells, thou potent witch :
We can't resist—we're thine for ever !



THE PRAISE OF WOMEN.

“ My curse on those of women ill who speke—
 I praye to God that their neckys doe breke.”

CHAUCER.

WOMAN may err—Woman may give her mind
 To evil thoughts, and lose her pure estate ;
 But for *one* woman who affronts her kind
 By wicked passions and remorseless hate,
 A thousand make amends in age and youth,
 By heavenly Pity, by sweet Sympathy,
 By patient Kindness, by enduring Truth,
 By Love, supremest in adversity.
 Theirs is the task to succour the distress'd,
 To feed the hungry, to console the sad,
 To pour the balm upon the wounded breast,
 And find dear Pity, even for the bad.
 Blessings on Women ! In the darkest day
 Their love shines brightest ; in the perilous hour
 Their weak hands glow with strength our feuds to stay.
 Blessings upon them ! and if Man would show'r
 His condemnation on the few that err,
 Let him be calm, and cease his soul to vex ;
 Think of his mother, and for sake of her
 Forgive them all, and bless their gentler sex.

SERENITY.

STANDING alone, in vale or mountain-top,
Upon the grassy plain or ocean shore,
Or far away upon a ship at sea,
We are the middle of the Universe.
Around us as a centre, Earth and Heaven
Describe their mystic circles evermore.
We move; and all the radii shape themselves
To the one point and focus of our eyes.
But in our mental life we disobey
The law of circles: on the outer verge
We stand for ever, sometimes looking down
Upon extraneous evil far removed
Beyond the bound of Fate's circumference,
Adown dark tangents infinitely stretch'd
Through gloomy Chaos, troubled by Despair.
At other times we seek the sunniest verge,
The amber and the purple blooms of Heaven,
And strive with yearning eyes, made dim by tears,
To pierce the secrets of a happier state.
Exulting are we now,—and now forlorn.
Lord, grant us wisdom! grant that we may stand
In the fair middle of the spiritual world,
Undarken'd by the glooms of utter night,
Undazzled by the noontide glow of day.
True wisdom and serenity of soul
Dwell in the centre, and avoid extremes.

THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE.

I.

I HAVE a wondrous house to build,
 A dwelling, humble yet divine ;
 A lowly cottage to be fill'd
 With all the jewels of the mine.
 How shall I build it strong and fair?
 This noble house, this lodging rare,
 So small and modest, yet so great?
 How shall I fill its chambers bare
 With use—with ornament—with state?

II.

My God hath given the stone and clay ;
 'Tis I must fashion them aright ;
 'Tis I must mould them day by day,
 And make my labour my delight ;
 This cot, this palace, this fair home,
 This pleasure-house, this holy dome,
 Must be in all proportions fit,
 That heavenly messengers may come
 To lodge with him who tenants it.

III.

No fairy bower this house must be,
 To totter at each gale that starts,
 But of substantial masonry,
 Symmetrical in all its parts :

Fit in its strength to stand sublime,
For seventy years of mortal time,
Defiant of the storm and rain,
And well attemper'd to the clime
In every cranny, nook, and pane.

IV.

I'll build it so, that if the blast
Around it whistle loud and long,
The tempest when its rage has pass'd
Shall leave its rafters doubly strong.
I'll build it so that travellers by
Shall view it with admiring eye,
For its commodiousness and grace:
Firm on the ground—straight to the sky—
A meek, but goodly dwelling-place.

V.

Thus noble in its outward form,
Within I'll build it clean and white ;
Not cheerless cold, but happy warm,
And ever open to the light.
No tortuous passages or stair,
No chamber foul, or dungeon lair,
No gloomy attic shall there be,
But wide apartments order'd fair
And redolent of purity.

VI.

With three compartments furnish'd well,
The house shall be a home complete ;
Wherein, should circumstance rebel,
The humble tenant may retreat.
The first a room wherein to deal
With men for human nature's weal,
A room where he may work or play,
And all his social life reveal
In its pure texture day by day.

VII.

The second, for his wisdom sought,
Where, with his chosen book or friend,
He may employ his active thought
To virtuous and exalted end.
A chamber lofty and serene,
With a door-window to the green
Smooth-shaven sward, and arching bowers,
Where lore or talk or song between,
May gild his intellectual hours.

VIII.

The third an oratory dim,
But beautiful, where he may raise,
Unheard of men, his daily hymn,
Of love and gratitude and praise.

Where he may revel in the light
Of things unseen and infinite,
And learn how little he may be,
And yet how awful in thy sight,
Ineffable Eternity!

IX.

Such is the house that I must build—
This is the cottage—this the dome,—
And this the palace, treasure-fill'd
For an immortal's earthly home.
Oh noble work of toil and care!
Oh task most difficult and rare!
Oh simple but most arduous plan!
To raise a dwelling-place so fair,—
The sanctuary of a MAN.



THE HISTORY OF A PAIR OF EYES.

I.

“You?—tell the history of mine eyes?

Well—some men’s fancies *are* unruly!

’Twould take three volumes at the least—

Ay—twenty,—if you told it truly.”

“No matter: let me try the task,

Though possibly my heart may rue it,

If, gazing on their light meanwhile,

I strive to render justice to it.

II.

“One morn—’twas twenty Mays ago—

The meadows gleam’d with flowery whiteness,
When on the world those eyelids oped,

And showed their inner orbs of brightness;

Two little gem-like spheres they were,

That knew no change of day or morrow;

Yet shone ’mid tears, as if to prove

The joy that had been born in sorrow.

III.

“Ere May a second time return’d,

Those little worlds were worlds of graces;

They look’d upon the earth and sky

And knew the light of loving faces.

They wept—they glitter'd—wept again—
And friends from strangers could remember,
And garner'd smiles beneath their lids,
To dart like meteors of November.

IV.

“Seven springs and summers cheer'd the earth—
Seven winters howl'd with stormy bluster,
And every season as it pass'd,
Left on those eyes increasing lustre.
They glow'd with many a baby-joy,
Suffused with tears of childlike gladness,
And sparkled with affection pure—
With hope, and sympathy, and sadness.

V.

“Ten years : and then on Nature's face,
Their long and silken lashes under,
At sunlight, starlight, or the moon,
They gazed with pleasure or with wonder.
They loved all lovely things of earth—
They beam'd with every sweet emotion—
Turn'd to the ground with modest grace,
Or look'd to Heaven with young devotion.

VI.

“But sixteen seasons wrought a change—
They learn'd a secret—by this token :—
That they could read in others' eyes
The admiration never spoken.

They learn'd what tell-tale mirrors show'd—
That whosoe'er might flout their bearer,
There might be maids as fair, perchance,
But not a living maiden fairer.

VII.

“The knowledge brought its natural fruit,
But being link'd with gentle feeling;
With sense, and modesty, and truth,
And virtue, past my wit's revealing;
Men's hearts were overthrown at once,
And through the world, you bright enslaver,
You walk'd—a thing of life and light—
On whom to look was joy and favour.

VIII.

“The hearts you wounded, who shall count?
Talk of three volumes of romances!
A hundred could not chronicle
The hurts, fatalities, mischances!
I cannot tell such endless tales
Half through, or quarter; who could read 'em?
Then, oh, be spiteful—heartless—vain—
And leave, oh, leave us to our freedom!

IX.

“But while, as now, you win our hearts
By sense and virtue, wit and kindness,
We gaze—we doat—we kneel—we pray—
The wisest worst, for utter blindness.

“Take pity, Clara,—make your choice—
The story of your eyes I’ve told you;
The sooner wed, the better fate
For those who hope as they behold you.”

X.

So sang a knight of olden time;
The eyes he praised, with pleasure shining;
And Clara tripping from the porch,
Unloosed his arms around her twining.
“I’ve made my choice, for love is blind,
And it has proved my wit’s undoing;
So fix the day, you foolish knight—
I’ll marry you, and stop your wooing!”



NINETTE.

I.

THOU borrowest from that heaven of blue,
 Oh, maiden dear !
 The depth of that cerulean hue
 In which thine eyes appear.

Within their orbs the sunshine lies
 Without eclipse ;
 And smiles, like meteors of the skies,
 Run races on thy lips.

Thou borrowest from the rising morn
 The colour fair,
 In which, thy temples to adorn,
 Streams thy o'erflowing hair ;—

And from the summer evening's glow,
 On Alpine peaks,
 The mingling roses strewn on snow
 That decorate thy cheeks.

Thou borrowest from all Nature's store
 Some charm or grace ;
 And hill and plain,—the sea and shore,—
 Yield tribute to thy face.

II.

Pay, pay them back with usury,
Oh, maiden dear !
With heaven-blue eyes look piously
On Heaven's o'erarching sphere.

Nature has lent thee smiles of light,—
Repay in kind,
With fair Contentment ever bright,
And sunshine of the mind.

If she have lent thy cheeks a hue,—
The fairest wrought,—
Oh, pay her back with feeling true,
With love, and happy thought.

For every gift, a gift impart ;
For face and form,
Give her a soul serene,—a heart
Pure, sympathetic, warm.

So shall thy debt be overpaid
With tribute free ;
And Man, and Nature,—happy maid !
Be both in debt to thee.

THE QUARREL.

I.

“HUSH, Joanna ! ’tis quite certain
That the coffee was not strong ;
Own your error, I’ll forgive you,—
Why so stubborn in the wrong ?”

II.

“You’ll forgive me ! Sir, I hate you !
You have used me like a churl ;
Have my senses ceased to guide me ?
Do you think I am a girl ?”

III.

“Oh, no ! you’re a girl no longer,
But a woman form’d to please ;
And it’s time you should abandon
Childish follies such as these.”

IV.

“Oh, I hate you ! but why vex me ?
If I’m old, you’re older still ;
I’ll no longer be your victim,
And the creature of your will.”

V.

“But, Joanna, why this pother?
It might happen I was wrong;
But, if common sense inspire me—
Still, that coffee was not strong.”

VI.

“Common sense! you never had it;
Oh, that ever I was born!
To be wedded to a monster
Who repays my love with scorn.”

VII.

“Well, Joanna, we’ll not quarrel;
What’s the use of bitter strife?
But I’m sorry I am married,—
I was mad to take a wife.”

VIII.

“Mad, indeed! I’m glad you know it;
But, if law can break the chain,
I’ll be tied to you no longer
In this misery and pain.”

IX.

“Hush, Joanna! shall the servants
Hear you argue ever wrong?
Can you not have done with folly?—
Own the coffee was not strong.”

X.

“Oh ! you goad me past endurance,
Trifling with my woman’s heart !
But I loathe you, and detest you,—
Villain ! monster ! let us part !”

XI.

Long this foolish quarrel lasted,
Till Joanna, half afraid
That her empire was in peril,
Summon’d never-failing aid ;—

XII.

Summon’d tears, in copious torrents,—
Tears, and sobs, and piteous sighs ;
Well she knew the potent practice,
The artillery of the eyes.

XIII.

And it chanced as she imagined,—
Beautiful in grief was she,—
Beautiful to best advantage,
And a tender heart had he.

XIV.

Kneeling at her side, he soothed her,
“Dear Joanna ! I was wrong ;
Nevermore I’ll contradict you,—
But, oh make my coffee strong !”

THE BRIDGE.

UPON the solitary bridge the light
Shone dim ; the wind swept howling on its way,
And tower and spire stood hidden in the gray
Half-darkness of the raw and rainy night.
When one still young and fair, with eyes mad-bright,
Paced up and down, and with a look of woe,
Gazed on the waters gliding black below,
Or the dull houses looming on her sight,—
And said within herself,—“ Can I endure
Longer this weight of misery and scorn ?
Ah, no ! Love-blighted—sick at heart—and poor ;—
Deceived—undone—and utterly forlorn !
Why should I live ?—forgive me, Lord !” she cried,
Sprang sudden to the brink, dash’d headlong down
—and died !

THE TWO NIGHTINGALES.

AN APOLOGUE FOR POETS.

IN the deep quiet of an ancient wood,
Two nightingales, that since the sun had set
Had fill'd the enraptured solitude with song,
Sat silent for awhile, and thus began,
One with the other, interchange of thoughts.

"I'm weary," said the one with weakest voice,
"Of singing all night long to these dull boughs,
With none to listen to my heavenly notes.
What are to me these green insensate woods,
Yon moon and stars, and the unheeding sky?
I would have lovers wander in the shade
At twilight hour, to listen to my voice
And call it beautiful. I would have youths,
Teeming with gentle fancies, quit their books,
And bend a willing ear to my sweet strains:
I would have sages hearken to my lay,
And own me poet of the pensive night.
Why should I waste my music on the winds,
Or how sing on, abandon'd to neglect?
I will away, and force the callous crowd
To be delighted. Through some city vast
My voice shall sound, till busy men shall stop,
And to my floods of swelling melody
Give ear enraptured. Brother, come away!"

“No,” said the other—“I am happy here ;
To me all needless is the world’s applause.
Amid these oaks, surrounded by these hills,
Lull’d by the dash of waters down the rocks,
Look’d on by moon and stars, leave me to sing.
My breast is full—my song an utterance
Of joy, that gives me joy to breathe it forth ;
My song its own reward.—Why should I court
The ear of men, or pine in useless grief
That hither comes no audience for my lays ?
Mine is a hymn of Gratitude and Love,
An overflowing from my inmost heart ;
And if men listen and are pleased, not less
My pleasure in administering to theirs.
But if none care to hear my melodies,
Not the less happy would I be to sing.”

“Thou poor in spirit !” said the first ; “Not mine
This dull contentment, this ignoble peace,—
To which I leave thee. On adventurous wing
I take my flight to the abodes of men,
And they shall honour and exalt my name :—
So fare thee well !” and as he said, he flew
From his companion, scorning his low mind ;
And ere the morning reach’d, on pinions free,
A vast, smoke-mantled, dim metropolis,
With domes and columns, spires and monuments,
And multitudinous chimneys tall as these,
Towering towards the ever hazy sky ;
And here alighting on a house-top, sat,
And look’d about him. Far on every side

Stretch'd the long line of streets and thoroughfares,
Trode by a busy and impatient mass ;
Church-bells rang heavily on the morning air,
And chariots rattled o'er the dusty stones.
Loud was the roaring of the multitude,
Loud was the clink of hammers on the ear,
And loud the whirling of incessant wheels,
Pistons and pumps, revolving cylinders,
And ever-hissing steam in factories vast.
But nothing daunted by the hubbub round,
And conscious of some utterance in himself,
The ambitious nightingale began his song.
'Twas a forced effort in the eye of Day,
For bird like him, by Night alone inspired ;
But still he sang, and on the smoky air
Pour'd a full stream of no mean music forth.
Till sunny noon, till lamplit eve, he sang,
But no one listen'd : all men were absorb'd
In the pursuit of pleasure or of gain,
And had no time for melodies like his.
Weary at heart the nightingale became,
And disappointment rankled into hate :—
“ Alas ! ” said he, “ the age of song is past !
I'm born too late !—Merit has no reward ;—
The cold, unfeeling, and most grovelling Crowd
Forsakes dear Poesy for love of wealth,
And all forlorn and desolate am I.”

So saying, he outstretch'd his wings, and fled
Back to his solitude, and sang no more ;
And living voiceless—angry with himself,

And with the world—he died before his time,
And left no mourner to lament his fate.

The other nightingale, more wise than he,
With fuller voice and music more divine,
Stay'd in the woods, and sang but when inspired
By the sweet breathing of the midnight wind—
By the mysterious twinkling of the stars—
By adoration of the Great Supreme—
By Beauty in all hues and forms around—
By Love and Hope, and Gratitude and Joy;
And thus inspired, the atmosphere was rife
With the prolong'd sweet music that he made.
He sought no listeners—heedless of applause—
But sang as the stars shone, from inward light,
A blessing to himself and all who heard.

The cotter, wending weary to his home,
Linger'd full oft to listen to his song,
And felt 'twas beautiful, and bless'd the strain;
And lonely students, wandering in the woods,
Loved nature more because this bird had sung.



THE WANDERERS BY THE SEA.

ANOTHER APOLOGUE FOR POETS.

I SAW a crowd of people on the shore
 Of a deep, dark illimitable sea ;
 Pale-faced they were, and turn'd their eyes to earth,
 And stoop'd low down, and gazed upon the sands ;
 And ever and anon they roam'd about,
 Backwards and forwards ; and whene'er they stopp'd
 It was to gather on the weedy beach
 The dulse and tangles, or the fruitful shells,
 Whose living tenants fasten'd to the rocks
 They pluck'd away, and listlessly devour'd.

And when they'd eaten all their fill, they sat
 One by the other on the placid shore,
 And with much labour and incessant care
 Polish'd the shells, until to brightest hues,
 Various and intermingling, they were wrought ;
 And these they hung around their necks and limbs,
 And look'd each other in the face, and smiled.
 This done, they wander'd on the shore again,
 And ate and ate, and drank and drank, and slept,
 Day after day—night after night—the same.

Meanwhile the firmament was bright with stars
 And from the clouds aërial voices came
 In tones of melody, now low, now loud ;
 Angelic forms were hovering around
 In robes of white and azure ; heaven itself

Appear'd to open and invite the gaze
Of these poor stooping earth-enamour'd crowds.
But they ne'er look'd, nor heard. Though the deep sea
Flash'd phosphorescent ; though dim seen afar,
The white sails and the looming hulls of ships
Gleam'd through the darkness, and the pregnant air
Gave birth to visions swathed in golden fire—
They look'd not. Though the heavenly voices call'd,
And told them of the world of life and light,
Of Beauty, Power, Love, Mystery, and Joy,
That lay beyond, and might be seen of those,
However lowly, that would lift their eyes—
They heeded not, nor heard ; but wander'd on,
Plucking their weeds and gathering their shells.
And if they heard the murmur of the sea
That bore them tidings of the Infinite—
They knew it not ; but lay them idly down,
Thought of the morrow's food, and sank to sleep.
And when they woke, with their care-deaden'd eyes,
And pallid faces, and toil-burden'd backs,
Began once more their customary search
Upon the bare and melancholy sands ;
As if that search were all the end of life,
And all things else but nothingness and void.

But 'mid that low-brow'd multitude were some
Of larger faculties, and foreheads fair,
Laden with knowledge : and of eyes that beam'd
Intelligence, and quick desire to know ;—
Who saw the visions teeming in the air ;
Who heard the voices breathing in the sky ;
Who o'er the illimitable waters stretch'd
Their eager gaze, and through the gloom descried

Shadows of beauty, which, but half reveal'd
Added a wonder to their loveliness ;—
Who heard celestial music night and morn
Play'd in the lap of ocean, or attuned
To every motion of the ceaseless wind ;—
Who heard th' harmonious cadence of the stars ;
Who saw the angels with their azure wings ;
And lifted up their voices in a song
Of praise and joy, that not from them were hidden,
By blinding avarice and worldly care
Of shells and sea-weed, all th' immensity
Of nature—all th' infinitude of heaven—
And all the hope, bright as a certainty,
That here, upon this low and gloomy shore,
Our life is but a germ, that shall expand
To fruit and foliage in a brighter clime.

And all of these spake to the crowd in song
And bade them lift their dull earth-bending eyes,
And see how beautiful were Life and Time ;
And bade them listen to the eternal chant
Of Nature, overflowing with its joy,
And the mysterious hymn for ever sung
By Earth to Heaven, of which their words inspired
Were the interpreters to human kind.

And some of these were angry with the crowd,
Who would not listen, and whose ears were vex'd
With all that would distract them from their shells,
And weltering dulse and tangles on the shore.

But one of them with venerable hair,
And a large brow, and face serene as Heaven,
Rebuked them for their wrath with mild sad words,
And said—"Oh brothers, weary not your souls ?

If they are happy with their weeds and shells,
Let them alone :—And if their hearts prefer
Pebbles to stars, and sound of their own feet
Plashing amid the waters, to the song
Of angels, and the music of the spheres—
Let them alone. Why should ye vex yourselves?
Are ye not happy that to your keen sight
Those things are shown which they refuse to see?
Are ye not happy that your ears can hear
The oracles of Nature, mute to them?
That ye are priests and prophets, though contemn'd?
Brothers!—be wise—make music to your minds!
For he who singeth from his own full heart
Has his reward even in the utterance.
Brothers!—be wise—and sing your songs in peace!”



A TRAVELLER'S TALE.

OF what shall travellers talk on rainy days?
 Of rain and snow? the sunshine and the storm?
 Of Politics? Religion? Scandal? Shop?
 Or personal anecdote? The weather? No;—
 The topic is full stale. Of politics?
 'Tis dangerous ground. Of creed? more dangerous still.
 Of scandal? Heaven forefend! Or of the shop?
 I prithee let us leave the shop alone!
 Of personal anecdote? Why, what is that
 But the old scandal in a new disguise!
 What shall we talk of, then? I know not well,
 Unless you hear a mournful thing that chanced
 Here in the Pyrenees, two years ago.
 I parted from the heroes of the tale,
 Two friends and comrades, in this very room,
 And little thought, amid their merriment,
 Their lusty health and joyous hopefulness,
 How soon the end would come. This cabaret
 Resounding now with laughter, jest, and talk,
 Seems no fit scene to lodge a tragedy.
 Yet so it was:—but let me tell the tale.

'Twas in September, just two years ago,
 That Vere and Huntley, youths scarce twenty-one,
 And fresh from Cambridge on their way to Spain
 Stopp'd in the Pyrenees. They did not hunt,
 Or shoot, or angle, or delight in sport,

But seem'd to glory in ascending hills,
Scaling high rocks, and tracking waterfalls.
They loved the rude and dizzy mountain-top,
And all the splendour of its wildest scenes.
Vere had a poet's eye and painter's hand,
And Huntley, though no poet, stored his mind
With images of beauty :—both would walk
Three leagues ere breakfast to a precipice,
To see the sunrise in its majesty ;
Ever on foot, and ever full of joy.
Their cheeks were tann'd in the healthy open air ;
Their limbs were vigorous, their hearts were light,
Their talk was cheerful as the song of birds ;
And when they laugh'd, the clear loud volleys rang
With such contagious music, that I've laugh'd
For very sympathy, yet knew not why.

It was a lovely morning, crisp and fresh,
When they invited me to share their walk,
And trace a mountain-torrent to its source.
They had no object but the exercise,
And search for natural beauty, ever new.
But I had promised Jean Baptiste, the guide,
To hunt the chamois with him, and I long'd
For my own sport, more hazardous than theirs,
And more congenial to my ruder tastes.
And so we parted. “We'll be back,” said Vere,
“At six, to dinner in the Cabaret :
Wilt thou dine with us, Nimrod of the hills?”—
—“With all my heart !” and so we went our ways,
And far adown the valley I could hear
Their jocund voices singing English songs,

And catch amid the pauses of the tune
The echoes of their laughter on the wind.

I had good sport upon the hills that day.
When I return'd, I noticed as I came
A crowd of peasants standing at the door ;
Here was a group of women,—there of men ;
And all discussing something that had chanced,
With quick gesticulation, and confused
And broken sentences :—some raised their hands,
Look'd up to heaven, and shook their heads and sigh'd.
While twenty voices speaking all at once,
Told the same story twenty different ways.
“Here comes the other Englishman,” said one :
“There's a sad sight within!” “Ay! sad indeed!”
Replied another. Quickly passing through,
I forced my way into the inner room,
And there beheld poor Huntley on the bed
With Vere beside him, kneeling on the ground,
Clasping his hands, and burying his face
Between them, and the body of his friend.
In all the beauty and the pride of youth,
Huntley went forth at morning, and ere night
He lay a corpse.—An awful loveliness
Sat on his clay-cold form ; so calm he lay
Amid the hurry and anxiety
And deep distress and pitying words and groans
Of those around—it seem'd as he alone
Of all that crowd were happy. He was dead ;—
But how he died, 'twas long ere I could learn
From the survivor, who with senseless words
And sobs, and groans, and prayers to Heaven for help,

Broke off continually what he began.
I learn'd it afterwards when he grew calm,
And loved him ever since. They'd track'd the stream
From morn till noon, discovering as they went,
New beauties, grandeurs, and sublimities
At every step. Right well in all her moods,
Those friends congenial loved dear Nature's face.
'Twas now the torrent with its burst and fall,
That charm'd their sight ; now, 'twas th' umbrageous
arch

Of trees, high-perch'd on the o'erhanging rock ;
Then 'twas the rock itself, with lichens grown,
And pine and larch ;—and then it was a glimpse
Betwixt the crags into a world beneath,
Stretching in loveliness of cultured plains,
Studded with farms and clustering villages
That fill'd them with delight.—And so they clomb
From crag to crag, and conquer'd as they went
More perils than they knew : lured ever on
By novelty of beauty and the heat
Of young adventure ; but they clomb too well.
Vere took an upward track, and scaled the crag,
While Huntley, travelling lower, reach'd a ledge,
He knew not how—where—pausing on the brink
With scarcely room enough to lodge his heel,
He could not stand with safety—or descend
Without the risk of falling from the height,
Two hundred feet into a chasm below,
Where boil'd the angry flood o'er jutting rocks.
Ten feet above him in security
Stood Vere—alarm'd,—but how to reach his friend
Seem'd to defy all knowledge to discern,

Or known, his utmost daring to attempt.
To mount seem'd easier than to clamber down ;
And he was growing dizzy where he stood.
Vere stretch'd himself upon the beetling edge
Of the tall precipice, and held his hand
Toward his friend, in hope, if hands could meet,
He might, by help of some projecting root,
Some angle of the rock, or tufted herb,
Hoist him in safety ; but the attempt was vain.
Their hands, by utmost stress of yearning grasp
Could reach no nearer than a long arm's length ;
So Vere bethought him of his walking-stick,
An old companion of his mountain walks,
And stretch'd the handle to his eager friend,
That he might grasp it with his strong right hand,
And with the left spring upward to the root,
Twisted and sinuous, of a mountain ash
That nodded o'er the stream ; and by this aid
Attain the safe high platform of the rock.
He caught the friendly aid ; but as he grasp'd,
He felt it lengthening—lengthening—in his hand ;
And his eyes swam in horror as he saw
The handle separating from the stick,
Leaving a scabbard in the hand of Vere,
The sword in his. Vere shriek'd in agony :
He had forgotten. Huntley groan'd but once—
Cried to his God for mercy on his soul,
And lost his footing. Down amid the rocks
He fell—and fell again, and all was o'er,

When Vere descended by the usual path
And found his friend, the breath of life had fled ;

The skull was fractured, but his face unhurt,
Seem'd as he slumber'd, while his stiff cold hand
Still held the fatal sword-stick in his grasp.
They brought the body to the Cabaret,
And on the third day laid him in his grave.
I thought, at times, two other deaths would fill
The awful measure of this tragedy.
That Vere's remorse, contrition, and despair,
At his unhappy, but most innocent act,
Would end his days. Yet though his grief was great,
'Twas nothing to the misery I saw
When Huntley's mother, young and beautiful,
Although her son was twenty years of age,—
Hasten'd from London to behold the grave
Where they had lain her darling. Let me close
The sad recital:—language fails to tell
The holy madness of a grief like hers.

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